

Public Questions for the County Council Meeting on 20 July 2017

Question from Cllr Andrew Kerby, North Dorset District Council to the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding in relation to the Transfer of Youth Services to the Community in 2016.

Question

Is the County Council aware of the ongoing issues faced by groups following the transfer of youth services to the community in 2016?

If so, I look for assurance that lessons have been learned and that there is support for the community groups that have ongoing problems.

Answer

The changes to the way our youth services are delivered has been welcomed from a variety of partners and the direct and targeted work with vulnerable young people is seen as an exemplar of good practice. We have been impressed with the response from community groups, Town and Parish Councils and volunteers to take on some of the buildings that we have either let or transferred so that open access youth provision can be continued. Where we are transferring the asset there are only 6 settings that have yet to fully transfer title. This is a tribute to groups and officers working together.

Community groups that have ongoing issues we can see that Blandford is in discussion with the foundation school whose building the youth centre is, Corfe Mullen where there remain some issues about the joint use of the youth centre building on a maintained school site.

As stated there are a variety of reasons for some slower progress but there is only so much the County Council can influence. We have made officers available to support the acceleration of process where things have become stuck and remain committed to supporting open access youth provision throughout the County providing things like Run a Club that supports the administration of a group and Crowdfunding. There are things the County Council can do but there are things that community groups should do for themselves. Where the County Council has a role to play that adds value then of course we will get into that space but it cannot take on the responsibilities of community groups and other parties to secure a particular outcome. The County Council has a role as facilitator and enabler and takes that responsibility seriously.

The success of our transition to a different model of youth provision has meant that over 450 young people have been supported through group work and 220 individual young people have had a one to one intervention. These are vulnerable young people who are at risk of poorer outcomes.

We are committed to be an organisation that is on a continuous improvement journey. We of course seek learning from everything we do including our support in this vital area of communities supporting their young people.